



# 1998 *Session-end News*

**Representative Marc Boldt**  
**17th District**



Dear friends,

You might wonder, what does a state representative do? That's a good question. A representative is chosen by the people to be their voice to state government and agencies. A representative helps to make changes in current law to represent the views and the will of the people.

What does this have to do with real life? We recently finished our legislative session in Olympia. Some say our work has ended. However, I believe the real work has just begun. The most important part of my job is listening and communicating with you. That's why I have continued to maintain an office within the 17th District. Our new office location in Vancouver is listed in this newsletter. Please clip it off and keep it.

If you are having a problem with government, come in or give us a call. Generally, we can help on most state matters. We also have resources for other matters we may not be able to answer ourselves.

The 1998 session was short, only 60 days, but I feel it was a very productive session. Although some legislation I sponsored died in the Senate for lack of time, other bills I sponsored and supported made it through the process to become law. This newsletter is a summary of those actions.

Thank you letting me represent you.

  
Marc



## **Funding transportation needs without a gas tax**

In my last newsletter, I said that we must meet our transportation needs. But not with an increase in the state's gas tax. It doesn't make sense to me to increase taxes when the state already has a sizable surplus of your money.

During the session, the Legislature resisted pressure by Gov. Gary Locke to increase the gas tax by up to 11 cents per gallon. Instead, Republicans proposed to take motor vehicle excise tax revenue (car license fee money) that currently goes into the general fund – where we have a large surplus – and move it to the transportation budget, where we have a shortfall.

Our plan would provide \$2.4 billion over six years, the same amount the governor proposed. The difference is that our plan would provide this money **WITHOUT** raising taxes. The Legislature approved this plan and sent it to the November ballot in the form of Referendum 49. (See November ballot propositions.) The future spending plan includes money to continue improvements for several local highway projects, including \$4.1 million for Ward Road to 162nd Avenue, \$1.6 million for the SR 500 NE 112th interchange, and \$152,000 for the Fourth Plain southbound on-ramp.

In the meantime, we also approved \$195 million to meet immediate demands for highway projects that address economic development and freight mobility, preconstruction activities for future projects, and other priority needs in the coming year. This includes \$6 million to begin work on the 192nd Street Southwest/Brady Road interchange and \$6 million for the Mill Plain extension.

## November ballot propositions

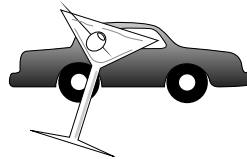
This November, two measures will be on the ballot:

**Referendum 49** is the funding package passed by the Legislature to pay for \$2.4 billion of transportation needs across Washington state. Funding for the plan would come from a transfer of motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) revenue from the general fund to the transportation budget. Surplus revenues in the general fund would compensate for the transfer.

The referendum would authorize a one-time exemption from Initiative 601 to permit the transfer without lowering the expenditure limit by the amount of revenue shifted. The 601 limit, and the state's ability to spend resources on education and other general fund programs, would not be changed. The measure would also reduce MVET by about \$30 per vehicle and would increase local criminal justice funding by 23 percent. The referendum will be on the statewide ballot Nov. 3, 1998.

**Initiative 200** is a measure that would prohibit state and local government entities from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to any individual or group based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, public education, and public contracting.

I-200 was submitted with 280,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's Office in January as an initiative to the Legislature. The Legislature had the option of passing the measure or taking no action and allowing it to go on to the ballot. The second option was chosen.



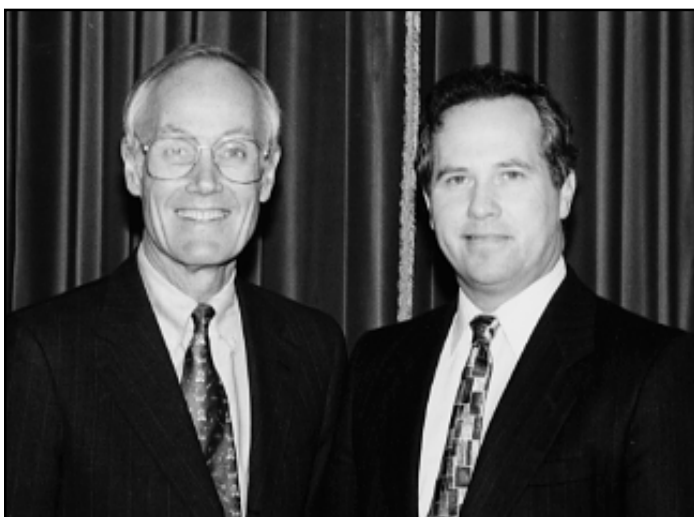
## Legislature gets tough on drunk drivers

In 1996, half of all the auto accidents in Washington that resulted in deaths involved alcohol. This year, the Legislature was committed to reducing incidents of drunk driving on Washington state's highways. A package of DUI-related bills which were introduced during session passed the Legislature. They include: Lowering the legal limit for driving under the influence from .10 to .08; requiring that a person's DUI conviction remain on the record for seven years; imposing a 90-day license suspension for first-time DUI offenders; revoking a driver's license for seven years upon third DUI conviction; impounding vehicles of drivers with suspended or revoked licenses; allowing electronic home monitoring in lieu of jail time for first-time offenders; setting stricter penalties for drunk drivers who have passengers in their vehicles; and requiring ignition interlock devices be installed on the vehicles of repeat DUI offenders and those convicted of a blood alcohol level of .15 or higher.

## Developmentally disabled ensured a choice

I was pleased with the passage of a measure that will ensure those who are developmentally disabled are able to make a choice of where to live, whether it be in their own homes or residential habilitation centers. Under Senate Bill 6751, the Department of Social and Health Services must develop an outreach program to allow developmentally disabled people to become aware of available services. Also, we provided \$600,000 in the budget for community residential placement of 24 developmentally disabled adults whose parents are no longer able to care for them. In addition, we secured an increase in the budget to keep up with the growing number of developmentally disabled children and adults.

I do believe this must be a funding priority for our state. These are great steps for both policy and budget. But I also think more is needed.



**Rep. Marc Boldt met with U. S. Senator Slade Gorton during the 1998 legislative session.**



## Boldt reels in lower fishing/hunting licenses

When the Department of Fish and Wildlife announced last year a plan to increase fishing license fees for seniors and begin charging kids for fishing licenses, I vowed to fight the proposal. During session, the department backed down and brought us a plan that would consolidate many fishing and hunting licenses and, in most cases, provide much lower fees. The packages are divided into three options: freshwater, saltwater and combination.

### Here's a sample of the proposed new costs:

#### Seniors who do all fishing activities including shellfish:

Current cost: \$42                      Proposed new cost: \$15

#### Young (age 12 to 16) deer hunters

Current cost: \$33                      Proposed new cost: \$18

#### All-activity hunters and fishers

Current cost: \$264                      Proposed new cost: \$159

## Group homes get stronger oversight

Last fall, a teen-age offender, assigned to a group home in Lynnwood, walked away from his job at a furniture store and raped and murdered a young girl who was babysitting. Unfortunately, it was not an isolated incident in which the lack of supervision and security has resulted in someone's death.

The Legislature took a close look at group homes this year and adopted legislation to strengthen the safeguards in placement, monitoring and oversight of juveniles placed in these homes.

## Clearing the air on emission testing

It doesn't make sense to require vehicle emission testing on newer cars which are not responsible for air pollution. Nor does it make any sense to place these requirements on people who live in rural areas where pollution from traffic is non-existent. That's why I co-sponsored a bill to change the vehicle emission testing requirements.

Under HB 1354, testing fees are reduced to \$15, collector cars are exempted under certain requirements, and beginning in 2000, vehicles that are less than 5 years old or more than 25 years of age will be exempted from testing. The Department of Ecology is also directed to establish a board to review plans that establish the geographical areas where emission testing is required.



## Drug-affected babies — making mothers responsible

As promised in my last newsletter, I introduced legislation that would provide treatment and consequences for drug-addicted mothers who give birth to drug-affected babies. It's very sad that many of these children are already addicted to drugs before they are born because of the irresponsible actions of their mothers. My legislation was merged into House Bill 2556. Under this bill, mothers of these infants are given a choice of chemical dependency treatment or a petition filed for removal of their child. On the birth of a second child, the woman will be required to use birth control and enter into treatment. After the birth of a third child, a mother who remains addicted to drugs could have all parental rights terminated. The Department of Health also will be developing a plan to increase services to pregnant women at risk of giving birth to drug- or alcohol-affected babies.



## Improving reading education

It's tragic that only 46 percent of fourth-grade students in Washington's schools met the proficiency standard in reading in last year's test assessments. Unfortunately, many schools do not include research-based, scientifically proven instructional methods and materials as part of their reading programs in the earliest grades. This includes phonics. Many teachers in our schools have never been trained in teaching phonics.

This year, the Legislature provided \$9 million for teachers who would like to purchase learning materials or receive training in research-based instructional methods. Teachers who receive this training do so by choice, and they decide whether to incorporate this information in their classroom. Another \$8 million was made available for teacher and volunteer training in establishing reading tutor programs.

Reading, which is one of the most important lifetime skills to be learned, must be taught early to be effective. This legislation is an important step in helping our children learn how to read.

## Unemployment recipients must look for work

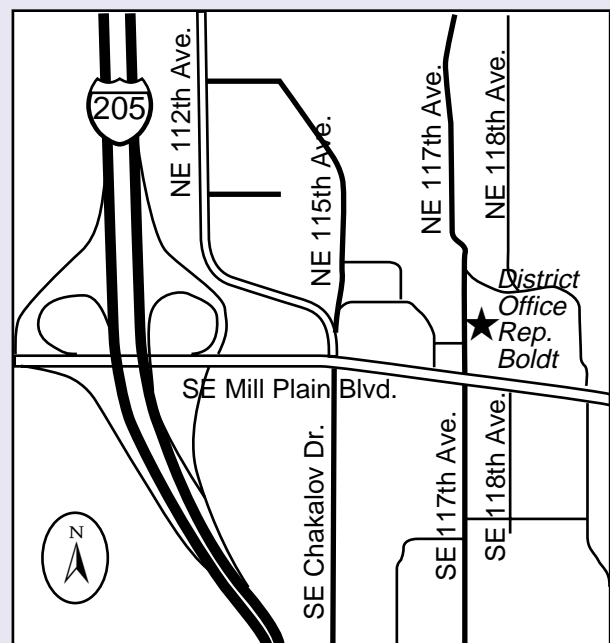
Washington is among the top states in total benefits for the unemployed. If you have lost your job, you shouldn't be using your unemployment benefits to have an extended vacation. You should be actively seeking a job. The Legislature passed a measure that tightens the verification requirements for collecting unemployment. Claimants who have received five or more weeks of benefits must provide evidence of seeking work, including contacts with at least three employers per week or job search activity at the local employment center. A re-evaluation of the call center process is also included in the bill.

## Aggressive agency fines are not fine

Under the state's budgeting process, money is allocated by the Legislature to state agencies to operate and serve the public. Unfortunately, some agencies have figured out how to pad their budgets by over-aggressive enforcement of the law, which in turn provides them more money through fines. This year, I prime-sponsored legislation that would plug that revenue source and give the Legislature proper oversight over this money. Under House Bill 2724, an agency is prohibited from expending monies received from fines, penalties, forfeitures, settlements, court orders, or other enforcement actions unless the agency first receives an appropriation authorizing the expenditure. The measure passed both the House and Senate.

## 17th District office in new location

We have returned the 17th District office back to Vancouver after a year in Brush Prairie. The new office is more centrally located within the district, providing easier access to people in both Clark and Skamania counties. The new office location is: 121 NE 117th Ave., Vancouver, WA, 98684. Our office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number remains the same at: (360) 260-6263. We have a new fax number: (360) 604-1821. And of course, I can always be reached by e-mail at: [boldt\\_ma@leg.wa.gov](mailto:boldt_ma@leg.wa.gov). Please drop by for a cup of coffee and a visit.



PO. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

**Marc Boldt**  
Representative

**The Boldt Report**  
*1998 Session-end News*

BULK RATE  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
Washington State  
Department of Printing